

# Gender and Education in Translation: A Case Study of Arvède Barine's Partial Translation of *The Tale of Genji*

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## Abstract

In this paper, I investigate Arvède Barine's (1840-1908) partial translation of *The Tale of Genji*, included in her 1883 essay, "La Haute Société japonaise au X<sup>e</sup> siècle: Un don Juan Japonais." Because neither Barine nor her essay on the *Genji* are well known, both have been largely overlooked by scholars researching the overseas reception of Japanese literature more broadly, and French translations of Japanese texts in particular.

One reason for this lack of attention also stems from the nature of Barine's work itself. Her translations are included as part of an essay that gives a general introduction and commentary of a few select portions of the *Genji*. As a general tendency, scholars focusing on French translations of the *Genji* have privileged full-length translations, and as a result, works like that of Barine have gone without extended critical investigation. This is despite that fact that in French translations of the *Genji*, works like Barine's are actually the norm. Of the seven extant translations of the *Genji* into French, only one can be considered a full translation. To this end, I argue that to really understand the history of the translation of the *Genji* into French, partial translations must be more fully considered.

In this paper, I also argue that partial translations provide us with an important opportunity to investigate the motivations behind specific acts of translation. That is, partial translations occasion the question of why certain passages are selected for translation in the first place, as well as the question of how translations are deployed in certain contexts. In Barine's case, reading her commentary and translation side-by-side reveals certain intellectual commitments that informed her choices as a translator. As I will demonstrate, Barine's concern with the state of female education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France appears to have been her main motivation for translating the specific portions of the *Genji* that she selected.

## I. Introduction

Today, *The Tale of Genji* is widely recognized as a classic of world literature. However, as recent scholarship has shown, there was a long historical process, both within Japan and abroad that culminated in such recognition. One part of this process was the translation of the text into a variety of languages.<sup>(1)</sup> In this paper, I will discuss one such case of translation in the context of 19<sup>th</sup> century France.<sup>(2)</sup>

There now exist as many as seven translations of the text into French, including partial translations. So far, the only complete translation is that of René Siefert (1923-2004), which he completed in 1988. Since 2004, a new translation project has been ongoing. It is currently being conducted in collaboration between researchers of INALCO (National Institute for Orien-

tal Languages and Civilizations) and the University of Paris, Diderot. Through this new project, the publication of another complete translation is expected. It goes without saying that translating a classical story as long and complex as *The Tale of Genji* requires a large amount of knowledge and time. Therefore, it is not surprising that all French translations of the text before the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were partial translations. In spite of the fact that they were only partially translated, each translation has important issues to be researched. I have examined some of these issues in my previous work.

In this paper, I will be focusing on one such partial translation by writer and translator Arvède Barine (1840-1908), which appeared in her 1883 article, entitled "La Haute Société japonaise au X<sup>e</sup> siècle : Un don Juan japonais." Because this article and its author are

not well known, scholars have paid little attention to them. Nevertheless, I hope that I can show the significance of Barine's contributions to the translation of Japanese literature into French. One way that I will do so is by providing a model for reading and handling partial translations, which have failed to garner the same attention as full length translations in the context of translation studies.

Up until now translation theory has tended to focus on the wider problems of "foreignization" and "domestication," ideas that begin arguably in Friedrich Schleiermacher's work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>(3)</sup> These ideas were later developed in more detail by contemporary theorists like Lawrence Venuti. While these issues remain of crucial importance, I believe it is also necessary to investigate the personal viewpoints and commitments of individual translators, and how these commitments impact their translations. These positions are especially important in the case of partial translations, because in such cases, it is necessary to understand that the act of translation also constitutes an act of selection. Understanding a translator's personal intellectual commitments therefore gives us important insight into why and to what end passages are selected for translation. To put it differently, a translator's act of translating ought to be understood with reference to the full range of intellectual activities that he or she engages in, rather than in isolation.

One way in which we can access these intellectual commitments is by understanding translation as a kind of interpretive exercise, or even as a form of commentary. As Walter Benjamin wrote about "successful" translation, one part of what makes a translation a "success" is that it: "[...] acknowledges its own role by means of commentary."<sup>(4)</sup> This, of course, anticipates notions of the "transparency" of the translator that theorists like Venuti would later develop as the basis of their own notions of "successful" translation.<sup>(5)</sup> I argue that while not necessarily conscious of these kinds of ideas, Arvède Barine's essay nonetheless provides a particularly good example of this relationship between the modes of commentary and translation. The main purpose of her essay appears to be introducing Heian court culture to her readers by way of the *Genji*. But as we will soon see, her comments also reveal another set of concerns that run alongside her broader goals. Barine's article is also crucial as one of the earliest reactions towards Sue-

matsu's translation of the *Genji* in any language.

As far as the general structure of her article, Barine provides short summaries of the plot, followed by her translations. She translated only a part of two chapters based on Suematsu Kenchō's English translation published in 1882, while also adding her own opinion and comments, such as comparisons of Japanese society and culture with those of France.<sup>(6)</sup> After some general information about *The Tale of Genji*, including an introduction of the author Murasaki Shikibu and how she wrote the story, it has four sections. In part I, Barine summarizes the "Kiritsubo" chapter and gives her opinions about the life of Heian period aristocrats. In part II, she translates some selected passages of the "Hahakigi" chapter based on Suematsu's translation and adds her own ideas. She translates some sections of the "Yugao" chapter in part III, and finally, she offers her own thoughts about the story as whole in part IV. In reading her translations and comments side-by-side, a clearer picture emerges of why Barine selected the passages that she did.

Up to now, few scholars interested in French translations of the *Genji* have addressed partial translations, focusing instead on Sieffert's full length translation. Yet, as I have noted above, partial translations occasion the opportunity to ask about not only why certain passages are selected, but also, to ask about how translations are deployed in their specific socio-historic contexts. Furthermore, given the reality that only a single full length translation of the *Genji* into French has been completed, it is clear that partial translations deserve more sustained inquiry than they have hitherto received. Barine's essay provides a particularly clear case for exploring these types of questions. Her comments, when read alongside her translations, not only help us understand the reasons behind Barine's selections, but they also serve a dual function as social commentary. To this end, I also hope to expand on Benjamin's notion of commentary as a means of disclosing a text's translated nature. I wish to also understand commentary as a means of accessing the translator's own complex process of selection that characterizes partial translations, and additionally, to situate it in one concrete socio-historical context by way of a case study of Barine's article.

Thus, I hope to both illustrate the close relationship between translation and commentary, and also, to argue for a reconsideration of the place of partial

translation in the field of translation studies. In Barine's case, an analysis of her translations and comments will make clear that she selected passages for translation based upon her concern for the state of female education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France.

## II. Arvède Barine: A "Moderate" Feminist

First, to give a sense of her commitments as an intellectual, it is necessary to introduce Arvède Barine herself.<sup>(7)</sup> Barine appears to have been born in La Rochelle in 1840. She was married to Charles-Ernest Vincens, who was a high-ranking government official. As with most women in this era, she had little opportunity to receive higher education. Nevertheless she was able to teach herself Latin, which in turn, enabled her to master German, English, Italian, and Russian. As we shall see shortly, Barine's own autodidacticism and self-education may well have been the impetus for her concern with the state of female education in France. This concern, I will argue, is reflected in her selection and treatment of passages in the course of her translation of the *Genji*.

Her career as a writer began in 1872 when she started work on her translation of Herbert Barry's *Contemporary Russia*. Her first scholarly essay was published in 1879. After translating Tolstoy's trilogy of autobiographies, she became increasingly interested in historical and biographical writings, eventually working as a historian, biographer, and critic. For example, she wrote biographies of Alfred de Musset in 1893, La Grande Mademoiselle in 1901, and so on. Nevertheless, female historians remained very rare in France at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was also elected as one of the first members of the selection committee of the Prix Femina, which is awarded to female writers. These aspects of her career reflect her ability to find success as an independent scholar and translator, despite the fact that her social reality almost certainly made the conditions for doing so extremely difficult.

It is likely the case that Barine took notice of the *Genji* due to her interest in Japonisme. Japonisme now refers widely to the influence of Japanese aesthetics on Western visual culture, but originally, it denoted a specifically French and Impressionist aesthetic that displayed the influence of Japanese culture.<sup>(8)</sup> The term began to be used in this sense towards the end of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While Barine's

interest in this aesthetic was likely the main reason for her curiosity regarding the *Genji*, another issue preoccupies her commentarial work on the text. Namely, as we have touched on above, the issue of female education, both in terms of how it was depicted in the Heian court culture that the *Genji* represents, and in terms of how this image of female education could be deployed for the purposes of commenting on the state of female education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France.

To this end, I would like to speak to the possibility of understanding Barine's interest in female education as a potentially feminist position. It is important to emphasize here that although the word "*féministe*" was in use in France as early as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is difficult to know with certainty how widespread this term was, to say nothing of how Barine herself might have identified with it. It is for this reason that I use this term cautiously when regarding Barine. Nevertheless, I would like to expand on French scholar, Isabelle Ernot's assertion that Barine was, at the very least, a "moderate" feminist.<sup>(9)</sup> In particular, I would like to consider the potentially feminist nature of her views on female education in light of her translation and commentary work on the *Genji*, which Ernot does not examine.

According to Ernot, Barine was able to present a kind of feminist stance, which in its moderation, did not overtly upset the patriarchal order. A good example of her subtle use of potentially feminist ideas can be seen in her pseudonym, "Arvède Barine." Notably, Arvède is generally considered a masculine name. As such, her readers often assumed she was male.<sup>(10)</sup> Moreover, Barine means "monsieur" in Russian, so Madame Barine signifies Madame Monsieur, or in other words, "Mrs. Mister."<sup>(11)</sup> She was also interested in the work of George Sand, a famous female writer who often presented herself in masculine dress, and who herself used a masculine sounding pen name, much like Barine. The practice of adopting masculine pen names was not uncommon among female writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Brontë sisters are known to have used masculine pen names, while Mary Ann Evans used the name George Eliot in her publications. Like them, Barine likely took such a pen name as a means of gaining credibility among her readership. At the same time, the intentional play of words represented in her choice of name may also suggest a more subversive, though still subtle position.<sup>(12)</sup>

As we have noted above, Barine's article is ostensibly informed by her interest in Japonisme, and to this end, also appears to function mainly as an introduction to Heian court culture for a French speaking audience. Yet, we have also attempted to show that when accompanied by commentary, translations provide a window into the intellectual commitments of their translators. In that Barine couches her concern with female education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France within an article that is ostensibly about Heian Japan, we can see another indication of her "moderate" feminism as well. Let us now turn to her translations and comments in order to see how these concerns play out in her article.

### III. Female Education in *The Tale of Genji*

Up to here, I have spoken about Arvède Barine herself. Now let me turn to her article about the *Genji*. It was first published in *La Revue politique et littéraire* in 1883 and was also republished in *Essais et fantaisies* in 1888 when she put together some of her previous articles into a collected volume. The latter inclusion suggests that for Barine herself, her work on the *Genji* constituted a significant part of her scholarly oeuvre.

The journal that published Barine's article was academic and read mainly by intellectuals. The content of the journal was usually divided into three parts, including university lectures, feature articles, and articles on French and foreign literature. Barine's article was published in the last category as an analysis of foreign literature. Barine introduced the author of the *Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu in her article, and her comments reflect her appraisal of Murasaki Shikibu's talent for observation, analysis, expression and so on.<sup>(13)</sup> Such observations were not based on Suematsu's comments, but written by Barine herself based on his introduction.

Let us turn now to her comments about female education. Unsurprisingly, Barine was particularly interested in the "Hahakigi" chapter, which contains a discussion of ideal femininity, and in which the question of female literacy is raised. She cites the passage that follows the account of Shikibu-no-jō's experience, which Suematsu translates as follows:

As for ladies, it may not, indeed, be necessary to be thorough master of the three great histories, and the five classical texts; yet they ought not to

be destitute of some knowledge of both public and private affairs [...]<sup>(14)</sup>

Barine offers some commentary before introducing her own translation, which is itself, not significantly different from Suematsu's. Her comments and translation are as follows:

Cette anecdote amena une digression sur l'éducation des femmes. On tomba d'accord avec Clitandre qu'elles doivent avoir des clartés de tout, avec le bonhomme Chrysale qu'une pédante est une peste, et l'on arriva à des conclusions qui mériteraient d'être renvoyées à la commission française pour l'enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles, car elles sont marquées au coin du bon sens le plus pur :

« Il n'est pas nécessaire que les femmes possèdent à fond l'histoire et les auteurs classiques ; cependant il faut qu'elles aient des notions des affaires tant publiques que privées. [...] »<sup>(15)</sup>

This anecdote brings about a digression on female education. They (the characters in the Hahakigi chapter) agree with Clitandre that women should have knowledge about everything, but also with the good-natured Chrysale that female pedants are pests, and their conclusions ought to be taken up as an issue by France's committee for the secondary education of girls, for this is a conclusion that has the stamp of approval of the most basic common sense:

"It is not necessary that women have a thorough knowledge of the histories and the classic authors; however, they must have a basic knowledge of public and private affairs. [...]"<sup>(16)</sup>

Both Clitandre and Chrysale are characters in Moliere's 17<sup>th</sup> century comedy *The Learned Ladies*. Clitandre claims that women should have a rich knowledge base, though they should not show it off, while Chrysale, who is at the mercy of his wife, claims that academic knowledge is not necessary for women. Barine's translation itself is not so different from Suematsu's. However, she not only retranslated Suematsu into French, but also referred to the issue of "female education" in the context of this episode, which in turn, gave her an opportunity to invite her readers to

think about women's educational opportunities in the space of their actual historical experience. Further, by comparing the scene in "Hahakigi" with that of *The Learned Ladies*, a text with which her readers could more readily identify, she closes the gap between Heian Japan and France as she saw it. Lastly, it is significant that in both scenes, it is male characters who are discussing female education. The vantage point that she provides is thus of the normative, patriarchal understanding of female education, which appears to be almost identical between 17<sup>th</sup> century France and Heian Japan. Yet as we will see in the following section, her commentary also runs counter to this normative discourse in subtle ways. Through this commentary she comments not only on the educational situation of women of the past, but also of her contemporary and immediate circumstances in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### IV. *The Tale of Genji* and Female Education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France

Barine's concerns about female education were not restricted to the ways in which it was represented in *The Tale of Genji* alone, but also extended to her contemporary circumstances. As she makes a point to note, the issues at stake in the scene from "Hahakigi" are ones that "France's committee for the secondary education of girls ought to take up [...]." How did Barine understand the model of female education in *The Tale of Genji*, and how did she use it to comment on the circumstances of female education in her own historical moment?

At this point, it will help to take into consideration the following sentences that precede the earlier passage. Suematsu translated them as follows:

"[...] and all people, but more especially women, should be constantly careful to watch circumstances, and not to air their accomplishments at a time when nobody cares for them. They should practise a sparing economy in displaying their learning and eloquence, and should even, if circumstances require, plead ignorance on subjects with which they are familiar."<sup>(17)</sup>

Barine offers commentary on this after she provides her own translation. Her translation and comments are as follows:

« [...] tout le monde, mais particulièrement les femmes, doit constamment prendre garde à ne pas faire parade de ses talents quand personne ne s'en soucie. Les femmes doivent être extrêmement économes en public de leur science et de leur éloquence ; elles doivent même, en certains cas, paraître ignorer ce qu'elles savent. »

Si j'avais l'honneur d'être ministre de l'instruction publique, je ferais inscrire ce dernier précepte en lettres d'or, hautes d'un pied, au fronton de tous les lycées de filles.<sup>(18)</sup>

"[...] Everyone, but especially women, always must be careful not to parade their talents when nobody cares about them. Women should be extremely sparing in the demonstration of their learning and their eloquence in public; they should even, in some cases, seem to be ignorant of what they know."

If I had the honor of being the Minister of Public Education, I would include this last precept written in gold, each letter a foot high, on the pediment of all girls' schools.

Like the previous example, Barine's own renderings are not so different from Suematsu's. One may thus posit that her work was mere retranslation. Yet here, once again, her comments indicate that there was more to Barine's selection of passages than a mere repetition of Suematsu's renderings. Specifically, it is notable that Barine wrote on the basis of the assumption that she was a "Minister of Public Education." By doing so, she therefore also places the realities of female education in 19<sup>th</sup> century France alongside the conditions of female education in Heian Japan. Or perhaps to be more precise, she sets the social expectations regarding female education during these vastly differing historical and cultural contexts alongside one another.

At any rate, with respect to her potentially feminist stance, her attitude seems to be conservative at first glance. However, as the work of previous scholars has shown, Barine was not a radical feminist, but a moderate one. Judging from the phrase "the pediment of all girls' schools," by which she surely means all female educational facilities in 19<sup>th</sup> century France, Barine likely wrote these comments with her contem-



porary circumstances in mind. By taking this position, she demonstrates her agreement with the notion that women should have knowledge, whether or not it is publically exhibited. At the same time, it is notable that she pointed out, albeit indirectly, the importance of female education. Though only tacitly expressed, it is possible to read her commentary as encouraging a subversive position vis-à-vis the norms of gendered education. This would certainly be in line with how scholars like Ernot have interpreted Barine's moderate feminism.

Fortunately, we are in a position to contextualize Barine's comments regarding female education. Specifically, certain changes in the administration and guidelines of female education around the time that Barine was writing seem to be reflected in her article. In 1880, due to the efforts of the politician Camille Sée, the final stage of secondary education, known as Lycée in French, was extended to include female students. In this way, at least on the surface, certain educational reforms in Barine's lifetime had provided new opportunities for female education. Yet, on the other hand, there were those who argued that the establishment of Lycée for young women did not go far enough. For example, no preparatory courses were established for taking university-qualifying exams. Moreover, Greek and Latin, essential subjects for the elite at that time, were not included among the subjects to be studied.<sup>(19)</sup> For these reasons, the Camille Sée Law was controversial for feminists, and arguably, it is with such a social background in mind that Barine claims that it is important for women to have knowledge. Again, we are able to see the way in which Barine's position not only informs her understanding of her contemporary social climate, but her choices as a commentator and as a translator of the *Genji*.

The reference to France's committee for the secondary education of girls was deleted in *Essais et fantaisies*, the 1888 collected volume, following the spread of female education. In fact, the number of female secondary schools had been increasing steadily, with a notable spike in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from 23 in 1883 to 71 by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in 1901.<sup>(20)</sup> This deletion is telling. Perhaps Barine felt that in light of the growing opportunities for girls to receive an education, her previous comments were no longer necessary. Here we can see how Barine's comments are tied to her immediate social

and historical circumstances, a fact that is evident in her willingness to modify the contents of her article to reflect the improved educational opportunities for women.

Barine's thoughts on the *Genji*, especially as they concern female education, have led me to wonder about female readers of the text more generally, and the role of female commentator in particular. Barine encountered these passages of the *Genji* by way of Suematsu, and saw them as useful in her elucidation of the state of female education. To understand how a female scholar in 19<sup>th</sup> century France came to this conclusion, it might be helpful to think about the issue of how female readers have read and received the *Genji* in Japan, especially in the context of commentary.

Notably, because medieval commentaries like *Shimei-shō* and *Kakai-shō* featured notes on the *Genji* written in kanji, at first only men wrote commentaries on the text. This is a fact we cannot overlook. To this end, it can be said that females were excluded from participation in the world of *Genji* commentary. However, certain figures were able to destabilize this patriarchal framework, such as Hanaya Gyokuei (1526-d.?), who is said to be the first female commentator to write *Genji* commentary in the male style mentioned above. Perhaps the most obvious sign of Gyokuei's desire to change the male dominated circumstances of *Genji* commentary is that she mentions in her postscript to *Kaoku-shō* that she intended it for children and female readers. During Gyokuei's time, some commentators identified their ideal readers as children and women, but this was simply a trope utilized to express modesty and humility. Thus, on the one hand, we should take a cautious stance on how to interpret the meaning of such a postscript, despite the fact that it is tempting to understand it literally. On the other hand, I believe we can see both of these possibilities in her words. Gyokuei herself mentions in *Gyokuei-shū* that to be intelligible for women, commentaries required their own commentary. This is largely because of their overly scholarly references and heavy use of kanji. *Kaoku-shō* on the other hand, would be a commentary that could stand on its own, and be read by women without additional education. If we take this ideal readership at face value, it is possible to take *Kaoku-shō* as an impressively forward thinking text. It expands the readership of the *Genji* to include women who were just as literate and scholarly

as their male counterparts. In other words, while male readers had a whole history of commentary littered with kanji and scholarly references at their disposable, beginning with *Kaoku-shō*, women too would have their own commentarial texts that they could read. Because no female author succeeded her, she holds a peculiar place in the history of *Genji* commentary. To this end however, she has also garnered little attention from scholars.<sup>(21)</sup>

This type of concern that Gyokuei demonstrates is also reflected in her commentary itself. For example, Gyokuei wrote commentary on the well-known episode in the “Hahakigi” chapter, mentioned above, in which a group of men judge and discuss the ideal woman. In the course of their conversation, it is mentioned that women who use kanji are unattractive. On this episode Gyokuei writes: “[Women] today [...] learn how to write kanji, while long ago [even though they also learned it] they made themselves out not to.”<sup>(22)</sup> As we have seen, Barine also mentions something similar. Gyokuei thus makes a point of showing that women did in fact learn to write kanji, even if they did not display this ability openly. As I have examined with Barine's comments to the “Hahakigi” chapter above, the issue of female education was noteworthy for both of them. Additionally, both Barine and Gyokuei emphasize the necessity of learning, even if such education could not be publically demonstrated. This kind of commentary cannot be seen before Gyokuei and is characteristic of her work. Such examples are few, and so it is difficult to generalize. Nevertheless, in Gyokuei's case, one can take note of the manner in which this kind of commentary suggests a female-authored text written for a female readership. In Barine's reading of the text as well, we have seen how female education becomes foregrounded in her comments.

## V. Further Comments on Female Education in *The Tale of Genji*

Up to here we have discussed examples where we are able to see Barine's potentially feminist ideas, but as previously mentioned, we can also see her interest in Japonisme in her commentary. This interest also reflects the wider socio-cultural backdrop from which she worked. She seemed to be especially interested in the cultural life of the nobility in the Heian period, which she analyzed from her own particular stand-

point. For example, she compared Heian court culture with the French customs and culture of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as we have seen in her comparison of the *Genji* with *The Learned Ladies*. But even in this context she was concerned with female education, therefore I will continue analyzing some examples that reflect this concern. For example, in her discussion of the “Kiritsubo” chapter she writes:

L'éducation du gentilhomme commençait à l'âge de sept ans, par la lecture et l'écriture. [...] Les plus grands personnages surveillaient eux-mêmes les jambages de leurs enfants. Le monarque qui possédait une belle main n'hésitait pas à se faire maître d'école pour les siens. L'empereur apprit lui-même à écrire au prince Genji, et plus tard le prince Genji, devenu homme, fera des modèles d'écriture pour une petite fille à laquelle il avait des raisons de s'intéresser.<sup>(23)</sup>

The education of nobles began at the age of seven, with reading and writing [...] The nobles themselves kept a close eye on their children's handwriting. Even the monarch, who wrote in a beautiful hand, did not hesitate to be a schoolmaster to his children. The emperor taught Prince Genji handwriting, and later, when Prince Genji became a man, he would provide writing models for a little girl in whom he had reasons to be interested.

In the last sentence, which I have underlined, Barine refers to the scene in the “Wakamurasaki” chapter where Genji teaches Wakamurasaki—the “little girl”—how to write, adding it to her discussion of the “Kiritsubo” chapter. If Barine had simply wanted to discuss the education of the nobility, it would have sufficed to show how the emperor had himself taught Genji how to write. However, Barine added the example of the “Wakamurasaki” chapter to this discussion of the “Kiritsubo” chapter. It may be possible to read these descriptions as implying that women received the same education as men in Heian Japan, at least in Barine's understanding. If, as we have argued so far, she selected passages to advance her potentially feminist ideas, then this would certainly stand to reason. Additionally, here we see Barine's creative use of two otherwise unrelated episodes in the *Genji*, which she

reads together in order to once again highlight her concern for female education.

Similarly, Barine seemed to have an interest in Japanese poems and introduced them in detail. In particular, she drew out the differences between French poems and Japanese ones, noting Japanese poetry's characteristics, such as its improvisational composition and its ability to be utilized in conversation. However, she also pointed out that poems were essential knowledge for the elite in Heian Japan and that they were necessary for both women and men. As she writes:

La poésie était une partie non moins essentielle de l'éducation. Il était d'usage entre gens du bon air de se parler en vers. La prose n'était pas exclue de la conversation, mais on y mêlait à tout instant des quatrains improvisés auxquels l'interlocuteur devait riposter à l'instant par d'autres quatrains, sous peine de passer pour un rustre. [...] Filles et garçons étaient dressés dès l'enfance à l'improvisation. Les vers coulaient de leurs lèvres chargés [*sic*] d'images poétiques et de gracieuses comparaisons. Les billets s'écrivaient en quatrains. On se traçait des quatrains sur les éventails les uns des autres ; on se parlait à soi-même en quatrains ; enfin je ne pense pas qu'il y ait jamais eu une société plus profondément atteinte de la maladie de la versification.<sup>(24)</sup>

Poetry was an equally essential part of education. It was customary among the people in the upper class to speak in verse. Prose was not excluded from conversation, but they always mixed improvisational quatrains within it, and the interlocutor had to respond instantly to those quatrains with other quatrains in order to avoid being regarded as a lout. [...] Girls and boys were trained from their childhood to improvise poems. The verses flowed from their lips charged with poetic images and graceful comparisons. The notes were written in quatrains. They wrote quatrains on each other's fans; they talked to themselves in quatrains. In the end, I don't think that there has ever been a society that reached enthusiasm for versification more deeply.

From the perspective of her potentially feminist stand-

point, it is possible to regard her commentary that poems are necessary for both women and men as one of her claims about female education. These descriptions are, at first sight, written from her interest in Japonisme, but behind them, we are also able to read her subtly feminist ideas.

## VI. Conclusion

To conclude, as we have shown above, there are several descriptions from the perspective of female education, reflecting what I have called Barine's feminist commitments. First, I treated her comments about female education in the "Hahakigi" chapter and argued how they were related with the social conditions of Barine's time. Though her method of approach is in some ways moderate, I think that it is possible to consider these comments as a demonstration of her ideas. Secondly, I pointed out that her ideas about female education can be seen even in her explanations of Japanese culture, which was no doubt influenced by the Japonisme movement. As I have examined in a previous article, Barine mentioned in her essay that females played an active part in Heian Japan. Based on these points, it might also be possible to think that *The Tale of Genji* was particularly suitable for demonstrating her position. Though it is only speculative, I have proposed that we can see here her motivation for translating this story in the first place.

As I noted at the beginning of this paper, translation is effected by translators' worldviews and besides their commentaries, in the case of partial translation, the passages selected by translators also reflect their ideas. Accordingly, Barine's selections, at least in part, seem to have been made in order to comment on the state of female education in France, by way of the *Genji*. In this paper, I treated these matters by examining Barine's translation. We began this analysis by considering Benjamin's notion that "successful" translations acknowledge their own role through use of commentary. I hope I have added to this insight by showing the ways in which "successful" translators might also be regarded as acting, at least in part, as commentators.

## Note

- (1) For an excellent study on the role of translation in the emergence of the *Genji* as a piece of world literature, see Emmerich (2013). See also David Damrosch's discussion of *Genji* in his study of world literature (2003, pp. 296-299).



- (2) This paper is adapted from one originally prepared for the Asian Studies Conference Japan (ASCJ) at Meiji Gakuin University on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June in 2015. I would like to express my gratitude to all of those who helped me prepare the original presentation transcript, and to those who helped me revise it into its current form.
- (3) See Schleiermacher's "On the Different Methods of Translating" (1813, 2012). In this text Schleiermacher outlines the two basic models of translation as either bringing the reader closer to the original, or, to bring the original closer to the reader. Venuti (1995) also adopts a similar position, introducing the terms foreignization and domestication to describe these methods, but also argues that the choice between the two methods is ideologically driven.
- (4) Benjamin (1936, 2002) pp. 249-251.
- (5) See Venuti (1995). Venuti argues that there is a concealment of the translator in modern translation practice. Yet, given the fact that all translation is reading and interpretation, the "hand of the translator" must be made more visible. In many ways, I argue the same. Here, I want to expand the implications of this theoretical position to include the selection of passages in partial translations.
- (6) Suematsu translated *The Tale of Genji* from the "Kiritubo" chapter to the "Eawase" chapter into English.
- (7) In summarizing Barine's life, I refer here to Ernot (1998). However, regarding Barine, we do not know much about her life in detail, and so Ernot was also speculating.
- (8) While I do not have the space to do so here, it is necessary to explore the influence of Japonisme on the reception and translation of Japanese literature in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In many ways, Japonisme provided a readymade framework for conceiving and imagining Japanese culture, and needs to be more critically engaged in the context of Japanese to French translation. For more on the Japonisme aesthetic, see Barthes (1982).
- (9) Ernot (1998, p. 100).
- (10) Some newspapers and articles during this time mistook Barine for a male author. Professor Michael Emmerich advised me to consider Barine and the issue of her "moderate" feminism from this perspective.
- (11) Tissot, (1909, pp. 366-367).
- (12) I am gesturing here towards Butler's arguments in *Gender Trouble* (1990) that gender identity is largely performative, and that active subversion rather than rejection is the most effective means of successfully challenging normative patriarchal standards. Barine's act of adopting her ambiguous penname therefore can be seen as this kind of subversive action.
- (13) See Tsuneda (2015)
- (14) Suematsu (1882, p. 47)
- (15) Barine (1883, p. 462)
- (16) All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
- (17) Suematsu (1882, p. 48).
- (18) Barine (1883, pp. 462-463).
- (19) Rabaut (1978, pp. 182-183)
- (20) Prost (1968, p. 263).
- (21) Some scholars have researched her from various perspectives, but there seems to be few to argue from the standpoint

that Gyokuei wrote her commentaries to female readers. However, Gaye Rowley specifically pays attention to this issue.

- (22) I confirmed this description based on the manuscript in Housa Library which is said to be the best among the existing manuscripts.
- (23) Barine (1883, pp. 460-461). Underlines are mine.
- (24) Ibid, p. 461. Underlines are mine.

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